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Ms. Cynthia T. Brown
Chief, Section of Administration
Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

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Dear Ms. Brown:

I am writing to urge the Surface Transportation Board to make a finding that there is a profound lack of rail-to-rail competition in the national rail system. The STB should change its policies to enable increased rail-to-rail competition.

Currently, anti-competitive practices within the railroad industry have driven costs up on Arizona electric cooperative consumer members' electric bills. That's not right and the STB can help fix it. The primary power supplier to electric cooperative consumers in Arizona is captive to the Union Pacific railroad for the shipment of coal to operate its power plant in southeastern Arizona. This anti-competitive situation leaves the captive rail customer virtually helpless in negotiating a fair rate for shipping. Challenging an unreasonable rate for rail shipping before the STB is a time consuming, expensive process. The STB should be in place to impartially look out for the concerns and interests of both the railroads and rail customers.

Rural-based business and agriculture rely on affordable electricity. Increased rail competition will help maintain affordable electric rates in rural America and will improve economic opportunities for rural communities like mine.

Increased rail competition will also increase the revenues of American agriculture by improving the ability of producers and manufacturers to ship their products affordably, thus improving exports, creating jobs and improving the standard of living in rural communities.

The Surface Transportation Board has an opportunity to make a positive difference and help improve our economy. The comments that the STB has received include numerous examples of the lack of adequate competition in the railroad industry. I hope the STB will find that there is inadequate competition in the railroad industry and will then revise their policies to enhance rail-to-rail competition in order to help preserve affordable electricity and good jobs throughout America.

Thank you.

Tom Jones
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